

SAMPLE INCLUSIVE POLICIES



Introduction

This packet contains sample policies that can help set a standard of inclusion and safety for all youth who might access services or resources at a given organization. These policies do not necessarily reflect the policies of the True Colors Fund.

Every organization is unique, so use these examples as a starting point to crafting your own. Each policy is cited to the original source below.

Non-discrimination

“It shall be the policy of _____ to maintain and promote a safe environment for all youth in the facility’s care. All _____ staff, volunteers, and contract providers are prohibited from engaging in any form of discrimination against or harassment of youth on the basis of actual or perceived race, ethnicity, immigration status, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. _____ is committed to providing a healthy and accepting setting for all youth placed in its facilities by training staff and educating youth to respect each other. Any discrimination against or harassment of youth, including by other youth, will not be tolerated. The provision of services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming youth in facility programs shall be free of institutional and personal bias and shall be based on the attached practice guidelines and procedures. _____ staff shall recognize and address the individual needs of each youth and shall apply _____ policies and practices fairly to all youth in our facilities. If you have experienced harassment or discrimination in violation of this policy, please file a grievance according to facility policy. All grievances will be reviewed and investigated immediately. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“_____ is committed to creating an environment that supports equal employment opportunity and nondiscrimination for all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, marital status, national origin, or disability. ([Virginia Anti Violence Project](#))

“Recognizing that prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping are prevalent throughout society and dedicated to the creation of a safe, secure space for those seeking services with us, it shall be the policy of _____ to maintain and promote a facility that provides the highest quality of services to youth regardless of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBTQ-identified youth receiving services at _____ shall receive fair and equal treatment, without bias, and shall be treated in a professional manner. ([Virginia Anti Violence Project](#))

“Employees, volunteers and other individuals involved in providing services to LGBTQ-identified survivors shall not discriminate against or harass any youth in their care and shall immediately report any evidence of discrimination, physical or sexual harassment, and verbal harassment of any such identified persons to their supervisor. ([Virginia Anti Violence Project](#))

“_____ is committed to providing all youth and families served by _____ and our contracted provider agencies a safe, healthy, inclusive, affirming and discrimination-free environment. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

General Programming

“_____ employees shall protect youth from discrimination, physical and sexual harassment or assault, and verbal harassment by other youth, based on a youth’s actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other protected categories. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“_____ will take all reasonable steps within its control to meet the diverse needs of all youth and provide an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other protected categories. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Employees should model positive behavior when interacting with LGBT youth and remind all youth that anti-LGBT threats of violence, actual violence, or disrespectful or suggestive comments or gestures, will not be tolerated. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“_____ shall include LGBT-affirming books, magazines, movies, and other materials in _____ library. All youth shall be made aware of these materials and shall have access to them when requested. Where possible, employees shall display materials, such as “safe zone” or “hate-free zone” posters that convey to youth that the facility maintains an LGBT-friendly environment. _____ shall ensure that employees are made aware of local LGBT resources and reach out to the LGBT community to find organizations the facility can contract with to provide supportive services to LGBT youth. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Under no circumstances is any staff member of _____ or its provider agencies to attempt to convince a transgender or gender nonconforming youth to reject or modify their gender identity or gender expression. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“Staff must be aware that Transgender and gender nonconforming (TGNC) youth are particularly susceptible to trauma, discrimination and abuse while in congregate care facilities. Staff must be

“It is _____ policy that all transgender and gender nonconforming youth shall be in homes and congregate facilities that are affirming of their gender identities. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“When a youth who identifies as LGBTQ enters the placement, staff must make diligent efforts to place the youth in an LGBTQ affirming home or facility, and shall ensure that other needs of the youth are recognized and met. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“All LGBTQ youth shall be in LGBTQ-affirming homes and LGBTQ-affirming congregate care facilities. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“Decisions on housing for transgender youth must be based on the youth’s individual needs, and must prioritize the youth’s emotional and physical safety. It is critical to include transgender youth in the decision making process. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“All youth shall be allowed to use individual stalls, within commonly accepted time limits, and be allowed to shower privately. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“Transgender youth shall not be required to shower or undress in front of other youth. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“Personnel should signal openness and acceptance through nonverbal and environmental cues. An example is displaying LGBT-affirming images, symbols or quotations, such as the equal sign or rainbow flag. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

Clothing and Appearance

“Youth shall be allowed to dress and present themselves in a manner consistent with their gender identity. _____ shall allow youth to purchase or shall provide youth with clothing, including undergarments, appropriate for the youth’s gender identity and gender presentation. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Grooming rules and restrictions, including rules regarding hair, makeup, shaving, etc., shall be the same in male and female units. Transgender girls shall not be required to have a male haircut, or to wear masculine clothing. Transgender boys shall not be required to maintain a female hairstyle, to wear makeup, or to wear feminine clothing. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Transgender and gender nonconforming youth shall be permitted to use approved forms of personal grooming consistent with their gender identity. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

able to recognize the signs of distress, support disclosure when appropriate, and follow appropriate protocols for reporting. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“Staff must set a good example and make youth and families aware that any threats of violence, disrespectful and/or suggestive comments, or gestures toward any youth will not be tolerated. Staff also shall not engage in these behaviors. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

Inclusion

“We have many types of women here: women of different races, religions, sexual orientations, gender expressions, and gender identities.”

“_____ empowers people to live healthy and successful lives. _____ celebrates our diversity and advocates for justice and opportunity.”

Housing & Facilities

“Transgender youth shall not automatically be housed according to their birth sex. _____ staff shall make housing decisions for transgender youth based on the youth’s individualized needs and should prioritize the youth’s emotional and physical safety taking into account the youth’s perception of where he or she will be most secure, as well as any recommendations from the youth’s health care provider. It is most appropriate to house transgender youth based on their gender identity. If necessary to ensure their privacy and safety, transgender youth shall be provided a single room, if available. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Youth shall not be prohibited from having a roommate based on a youth’s actual or perceived sexual orientation. If a youth is fearful of rooming with a particular youth, he or she will be provided a different roommate or a single room, if available. This assignment will be made in accordance with classification procedures and facility safety and security needs. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Consistent with the facility’s reasonable and necessary security policies, _____ shall provide transgender youth with safety and privacy when using the shower and bathroom and when dressing and undressing. Transgender youth shall not be required to shower or undress in front of other youth and shall be permitted to use the bathroom that is consistent with their gender identity. Where available, transgender youth shall have access to single-occupancy bathrooms and showers. Such accommodation shall be provided in a sensitive manner. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Transgender youth in _____ may, but are not required to, shave their faces and bodies as permitted. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“A youth shall not be prevented from requesting, using, or disciplined for using a form of personal grooming because it does not match gender norms. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“Youth in _____ shall be permitted to wear clothing consistent with their gender identity. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“Youth will be made aware that they are always able to wear undergarments and/or clothing of their choice (that makes them most comfortable), regardless of its gender associations. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

Language: Paperwork, Names, Pronouns

“Employees, volunteers, and contractors, when working with youth at _____ shall use respectful language and terminology that does not further stereotypes about LGBT people. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Employees, volunteers, and contractors of _____, in the course of their work, shall not refer to youth by using derogatory language in a manner that conveys bias towards or hatred of LGBT people. In particular, employees of _____ shall not imply to or tell LGBT youth that they are abnormal, deviant, or sinful, or that they can or should change their sexual orientation or gender identity. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Transgender youth shall be referred to by their preferred name and the pronoun that reflects the youth’s gender identity, even if their name has not been legally changed. All written documentation about a transgender youth shall use the youth’s preferred name as well note the youth’s legal name recognized by the court. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Employees shall not disclose a youth’s sexual orientation or gender identity to other youth at the facility or to outside parties, individuals, or agencies, such as healthcare or social service providers or a youth’s family and friends, without the youth’s permission, unless such disclosure is necessary to comply with state or federal law. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“All youth may request that _____ and provider agency staff use a preferred first name and the gender with which they identify, rather than their legal name. Youth must also be referred to by the pronoun that they state reflects their preferred gender identity or expression. All staff are required to comply with such requests at all times. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“All staff must clarify with the youth which name and pronouns should be used in which settings—including in conversations with the young person’s family, other providers, and Family Court. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“Consistent use of preferred name/pronoun must be documented in systems of record after initial documentation of legal name. Staff must clearly indicate which name is preferred by the young person in documentation, and identify in which situations this name should be used. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“Personnel are prohibited from using language that demeans, ridicules or condemns LGBT individuals. Personnel should also avoid words that convey common misconceptions about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), such as referring to LGBT status as a ‘lifestyle’ or ‘preference.’ ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Personnel should avoid making assumptions about the SOGIE of youth or using heteronormative language – meaning language that assumes that everyone is heterosexual or that heterosexuality is preferable or superior to any other identity. An example is asking a boy, “Do you have a girlfriend?” A neutral alternative is, “Are you dating anyone?” ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

“Personnel should use the preferred name and gender pronoun of transgender or gender nonconforming youth, regardless of the name on the youth’s identity documents.”

“Personnel should be aware of cultural and generational differences in language related to SOGIE, and should defer to youth about the language they use to describe their identity. ([National Center for Lesbian Rights](#))

Referrals

“Staff working with youth must identify and become familiar with community resources to support LGBTQ youth. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))

“_____ and provider agency staff are prohibited from employing, contracting with, or making referrals to mental health providers and/or other service providers who attempt to change a youth’s gender identity. Any attempt to ‘correct’ or change youth’s gender identity or expression through corrective or reparative therapy is strictly prohibited. ([NYC Administration for Children Services](#))